

Building
resilience

Virtual
AEM

Home office
ergonomics

Don't roll
it back

CLOSED Circuit

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

JUNE 2020

Change is
opportunity

The background of the cover features a stylized illustration of a hand holding a glowing globe. The globe is covered in a complex network of white lines and dots, resembling a circuit board or a digital network. The hand is rendered in a dark silhouette, and the background transitions from a dark blue at the top to a bright orange at the bottom, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall theme is one of global connectivity and resilience.



CLOSED Circuit

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Bug flow experiment supports the Colorado

By Eric Barendsen

Beginning May 1, WAPA and the Bureau of Reclamation, along with other partners, kicked off a third year of “bug flow” experiments on the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam. The investigation, part of the Department of the Interior’s Glen Canyon Dam Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan, aims to improve egg-laying conditions for aquatic insects in the Grand Canyon by tweaking the weekly schedule of hydropower releases.

Citizen scientists use a light trap to assess aquatic insects in the Grand Canyon. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey and *Freshwaters Illustrated*.)

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Top: Non-biting midges are one of the subjects of this year's bug flow study. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey and *Freshwaters Illustrated*.)

Bottom: Caddisflies are typically an important food item for fish, but they are rarely caught in the Grand Canyon. (Photo by Craig Ellsworth.)



The midges, caddisflies and other bugs that could benefit from the lower-flow weekends are an important food source for the endangered humpback chub and for prized sport fish such as rainbow trout. The fly-fishing community and conservation groups are interested in improving the habitat for these fish in a way that doesn't also impact other important resources such as hydropower production at Glen Canyon Dam.

The bug flows are an ecological experiment conducted at the dam with the dual purposes of trying to improve downstream habitat while also increasing the value of hydropower. Operators from the Bureau of Reclamation, in coordination with WAPA, will maintain routine

hydropower production flows on weekdays—with slightly higher flows than normal—but dial releases back to relatively low, steady flows on weekends until the end of August. Hourly weekday release patterns and total release volumes will remain unchanged. The reduction in flows on the weekends allows for more water to be released on the weekdays when electrical demand is higher and power is more valuable.

Muddied results

Many aquatic insects lay their eggs on rocks, vegetation and other materials near the edges of rivers. Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey's Grand Canyon Monitoring

and Research Center are looking to see if eggs laid during low weekend flows will survive better than eggs laid during fluctuating flows that occur throughout the rest of the week.

"Results from the first two years have been a little ambiguous," said Fish Biologist **Craig Ellsworth**. "The data collected so far have yet to show an increase in bugs that we believe are related to the bug flow experiment."

A large increase in the caddisfly population measured on the river in 2018 was initially attributed to the 2018 bug flow experiment, Ellsworth explained. But because these caddisflies have a one-year lifecycle, they had actually emerged from eggs laid in 2017, the year before bug flows started.



At the same time, water conditions in Grand Canyon were unusually clear during the fall and winter of 2017-18. This complicates the story that poor egg-laying conditions, and not some other factor, are to blame for the shrinking caddisfly populations in Grand Canyon.

The number of bugs collected during last year's experiment returned to pre-bug flow levels. This could be an indication that other factors, such as the muddiness of the river following winter and summer storms, may have

a stronger effect on bug populations than hydropower impacts do.

"The scientists want to conduct this experiment for at least three consecutive years to allow the numbers of aquatic insects to grow over time, kind of like compounding interest at the bank, which we hope will give us a strong signal to interpret whether the experiment was a success or not," said Fish Biologist **Shane Capron**. "If successful, this offers us another tool to improve the productivity of the river below Glen Canyon Dam."

Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey's Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center gather data for the bug flow experiment as they float the Colorado. (Photo by Craig Ellsworth.)

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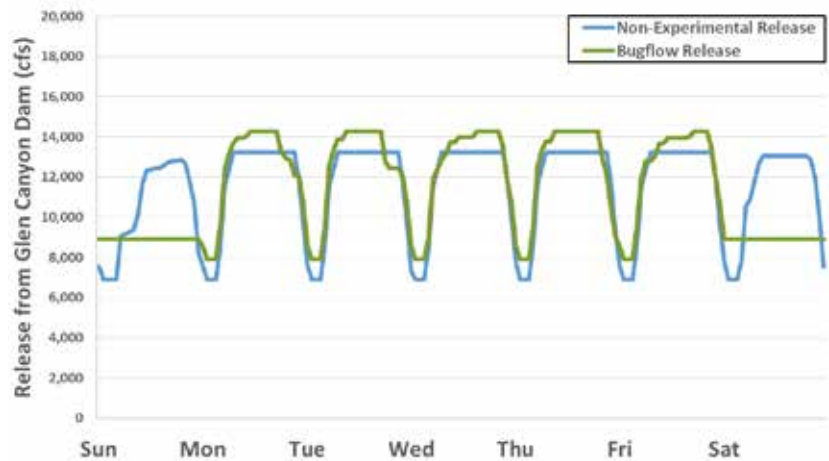
The sampling cycle

The evolving COVID-19 pandemic and response has affected researchers' ability to monitor the experiment. Specifically, light trapping—a way of catching insects for scientific study—is conducted by river guides and other people rafting down the Grand Canyon as citizen scientists. The closure of Grand Canyon National Park delayed this year's citizen-scientist sampling by a few weeks.

However, the delay shouldn't put a damper on the overall study. "Even if these light trap and other sampling activities begin later than usual, they will still provide valuable data to assess the experiment," said Ellsworth.

Because of the one-year lifecycle of most of the bugs in the canyon, assessing any improvements in egg survival due to this year's experiment would be done through monitoring the bug populations that are produced next year.

The U.S. Geological Survey has been in discussions with Grand Canyon National Park looking for other innovative ways of collecting light-trap samples. If approved, it would yield some monitoring coverage when access to the park is limited.



Moving water from the weekend to the weekday—when electrical demand is higher and power is more valuable—helped offset the cost of the experiment.

Solving for ecological success

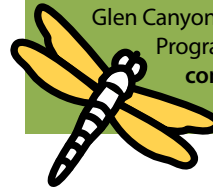
The decision to conduct a third year of bug flow experiments was based on input from a collaboration including WAPA, Reclamation, the USGS, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The team also receives input from the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Upper Colorado River Commission and all seven of the Colorado River Basin States.

The experiments are meant to benefit the Colorado River ecosystem through the Grand Canyon while meeting water delivery requirements and minimizing negative impacts to hydropower production.

"By directly experimenting with flows, researchers gain valuable insights about the aquatic ecosystem in the Grand Canyon," said Capron. "Beyond the potential benefits to bugs and the wildlife that relies on them, this third year of bug flows will increase our knowledge base, enabling better future decision making on Glen Canyon Dam operations." □

Note: Barendsen is a public affairs specialist.

Follow the Bug Flow experiment on the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program's wiki. Visit gcdamp.com and search for "bugflow".



There is no shortage of great views while monitoring scientific studies in the Grand Canyon. (Photo by Teresa Waugh.)



President's office recognizes employees

On May 8, Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** announced that four WAPA employees had been recognized by the Executive Office of the President with Gears of Government Awards for 2020.



The award recognizes exceptional individuals and teams across the federal workforce whose performance and dedication deliver key outcomes for the American people, including mission results, customer service and accountable stewardship.

"Department of Energy candidates went through a comprehensive evaluation and selection process," said Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette. "I am proud of our DOE winners for their outstanding contributions to the department and the nation."

An individual award went to Management and Program Analyst **Lynette Wright** for leading 15 Department of Energy process improvement project teams. Under her leadership, the teams identified improvements that resulted in more than \$1 million in cost savings.

"As a process improvement wonk, a Gears of Government Award and recognition on performance.gov is analogous to an actor winning an Oscar," Wright said.

Despite winning an individual award, Wright acknowledged that her success required the support of many others. She thanked the WAPA improvement teams and their leaders, adding, "I'm just lucky enough to be able to work with them!"

She also thanked Acting Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer **Jennifer Rodgers**.

"She has been an incredible leader and mentor," Wright explained. "Her guidance and subtle steering helped me to avoid blowing stuff up. But, on the flip side, if something needed a jolt, she 'encouraged' me to lob the grenade, duck and cover my ears!"

A team award went to three members of WAPA's Vegetation

Management team as well as two Forest Service employees.

The WAPA employees recognized were Chief of Staff **Melissa Ardis**, Vegetation Management Specialist **Neilie Goodwin** and Electronic Integrated Systems Mechanic **Brian Little**. The team developed plans to safely clear vegetation around WAPA transmission lines to reduce risk of fire.

"It was a testament to true inter-agency collaboration that we were able to get authorization to conduct vegetation management activities in areas we had not been able to access for a number of years," said Ardis. "Conducting vegetation management and keeping our lines clear of vegetation is crucial to ensure continued operation of our system and keeping the lights on for our customers."

"It's exciting to be recognized for vegetation management," Goodwin added. "It's important work, and it often goes unnoticed until something goes wrong. The Rocky Mountain

Vegetation Management program prides itself on proactively managing vegetation for the security and reliability of power transmission, as well as the safety of Maintenance employees and the public."

The awards will be presented to the winning employees when the pandemic situation has improved enough that a safe return to the office environment is possible.

"As I have said many times, I await the day that I may safely return to the office with all of you," said Gabriel in his announcement. "Handing you your Gears of Government Award in person gives me yet another reason to look forward to that day." □



View the complete list of winners at performance.gov/gearawards/winners

Individual award

Lynette Wright

Led 15 Department of Energy process improvement project teams, identifying 27 processes and 280 data elements across 23 functional areas and regional offices for improvement. Her work helped the DOE to shift from low-value to high-value work, resulting in more than \$1 million in cost savings.



Team award

Vegetation Management Team

Melissa Ardis
E. Lynn Burkett (U.S. Forest Service)
Matt Custer (U.S. Forest Service)
Neilie Goodwin
Brian Little

Developed plans to safely clear vegetation around the Western Area Power Administration transmission lines. The team partnered with other agencies to ensure the continuous flow of power and reduce the risk of fire while maintaining regulatory compliance.

Building UGP's biological risk assessment

By Alyssa Fellow

Around two years ago, I started as a biologist in WAPA's Upper Great Plains region. My supervisor challenged me to come up with a regionwide biological strategy, similar to that which has been pursued for archaeology resources.

The Upper Great Plains service area is home to many federally listed threatened and endangered species. These include the piping plover bird, the Topeka shiner fish and the Dakota skipper butterfly, to name just a few.

However, while certain species of concern occur naturally within UGP's regional boundaries, the geographic spread of WAPA's predominantly linear infrastructure cannot overlap biologically sensitive areas—such as breeding locations—of these species. Further, even where there is overlap in biologically sensitive areas and UGP infrastructure, WAPA's actions may not have the potential to impact these plants or animals or their habitats. A number of laws, rules and regulations, including the Endangered Species Act, require WAPA to avoid impacting biologically sensitive areas of these species.

Additionally, threats to species of concern may be relatively well documented in professional scientific journals, but many threats or related recovery actions are not relevant to WAPA's authority. Therefore, spatial synthesis of actual species sensitive-area occurrence data, when viewed through a filter of relevant threats, creates an opportunity for a simplified approach to assessing biological risk.

In an effort to build a ground-based framework, UGP has taken initial steps toward developing an assessment that can inform future program strategies and decision making for projects.

Entering into agreements with seven states and federal partners enabled UGP to assemble known species-use locations, which the region can then present visually on a map for easy understanding.

The reference map streamlines the approach to analyzing biological risk by classifying potential for conflict into high, medium, or low categories. The

“heat” map overlays species and habitat occurrence data with infrastructure locations. This map is paired with a cross reference table that indicates relevant threats or recovery actions, so that line crew members or project planners can make use of them.

State fish and wildlife agencies are often the stewards of maintaining and protecting the data about actual biologically sensitive areas. When species occur on public lands, additional data is sometimes found in Bureau of Land Management or the Forest Service records. The Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey also maintain protected-species datasets, often derived from species-specific research projects.

In a major and ongoing initiative, these partnerships were leveraged in order for UGP to collect actual biological presence data points.

These data are then extensively sorted and merged, which is how UGP is arriving at regionwide maps detailing relative biological risk areas.

After wading through hundreds of pages of recovery plans, UGP identified recovery-action items associated with WAPA authorities for several species of concern within the region. Additionally, after sifting through decades of foundational literature, UGP thoughtfully eliminated irrelevant threats from consideration.

Critical to this effort was an understanding of the potential effects resulting from WAPA's actions and a working knowledge of how pertinent laws are executed across the geographic and political landscape.

This effort aligns with WAPA's core values to “Seek. Share. Partner,” and “Respect self, others and the environment.” Maps and other resources like these will make it much easier for the region to see where potential conflicts with species of concern might occur, and also how to avoid or mitigate them. □

Note: Fellow is a biologist.

Example species of concern

Piping plover

Species information: Can be found nesting on sparsely vegetated sand or gravel beaches adjacent to alkali wetlands and on sparsely vegetated interior riverine sand bars. Peak nesting extends from late April through August, with the majority taking place in May. Fledging time is 21 days.



Relevant recovery actions: Reduce transmission line collision. Avoid breeding disturbance.

American burying beetle

Species information: Prime habitat consists of low wetland meadows dotted with old growth cottonwoods. Sub-irrigated, well-watered soils. Little or no cropland visible. Poor habitat consists of low-lying grassland. Heavily cropped. Areas of blowout and floodplain. Potential for excessive light pollution.



Relevant recovery actions: Contact Environment for habitat evaluation and to determine need for surveys. Mow at least two weeks prior to the commencement of ground disturbing activities, from March 15 through Oct. 31. Mow construction areas such that the vegetation is less than eight inches. Mow weekly to maintain height, if necessary. Reduce use of pesticides, herbicides and lighting. Remove carcasses. Survey for additional populations.

Northern long-eared bat

Species information: Peak activity is generally 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes after sunrise Aug. 15 through Oct. 15. Summer habitat appears to be strongly correlated with mature forested areas in the floodplains of major rivers like the Missouri River or prairie river drainages west of the Missouri River with a cottonwood component. Winter hibernacula locations are less documented but expected to be within 50 miles of summer habitat. Peak activity during fall migration is highest-risk time for wind farm fatalities.



Relevant recovery actions: Contact Environment before cutting trees. Identify roost sites. Do not cut roost trees. Avoid cutting dead trees and impacting streams. Reduce wind turbine fatalities through feathering of blades below cut-in speeds and increasing cut-in speeds to 16.4 feet per second.

Dakota skipper

Species information: June and July: Females lay eggs. Ten days for pupation. Adults die. From hatch to fall: Larvae shelter at or below the ground surface and emerge at night to feed. Fall: Larvae become dormant. Winter: Shelter at or just below ground level. Spring: Emerge.



Relevant recovery actions: Avoid habitat disturbance June through August. Promote native vegetation and report weeds. Avoid broadcast applications of pesticides and herbicides. Mow infrequently and leave at least eight inches of stubble.

Golden eagle

Species information: Jan, Feb: Nest construction. March, April: Egg laying. March to May: Incubation. April, May: Hatching. May to July: Nestling. June, July: Fledging.



Relevant recovery actions: From Jan. 15 through July 31, do not agitate or bother to a degree that could cause injury; interference with normal breeding, feeding or sheltering behavior; or nest abandonment. No aircraft within 1,000 meters of nest.

Whooping crane

Species information: Peak migration April and October. Black wing tips, legs sticking out.



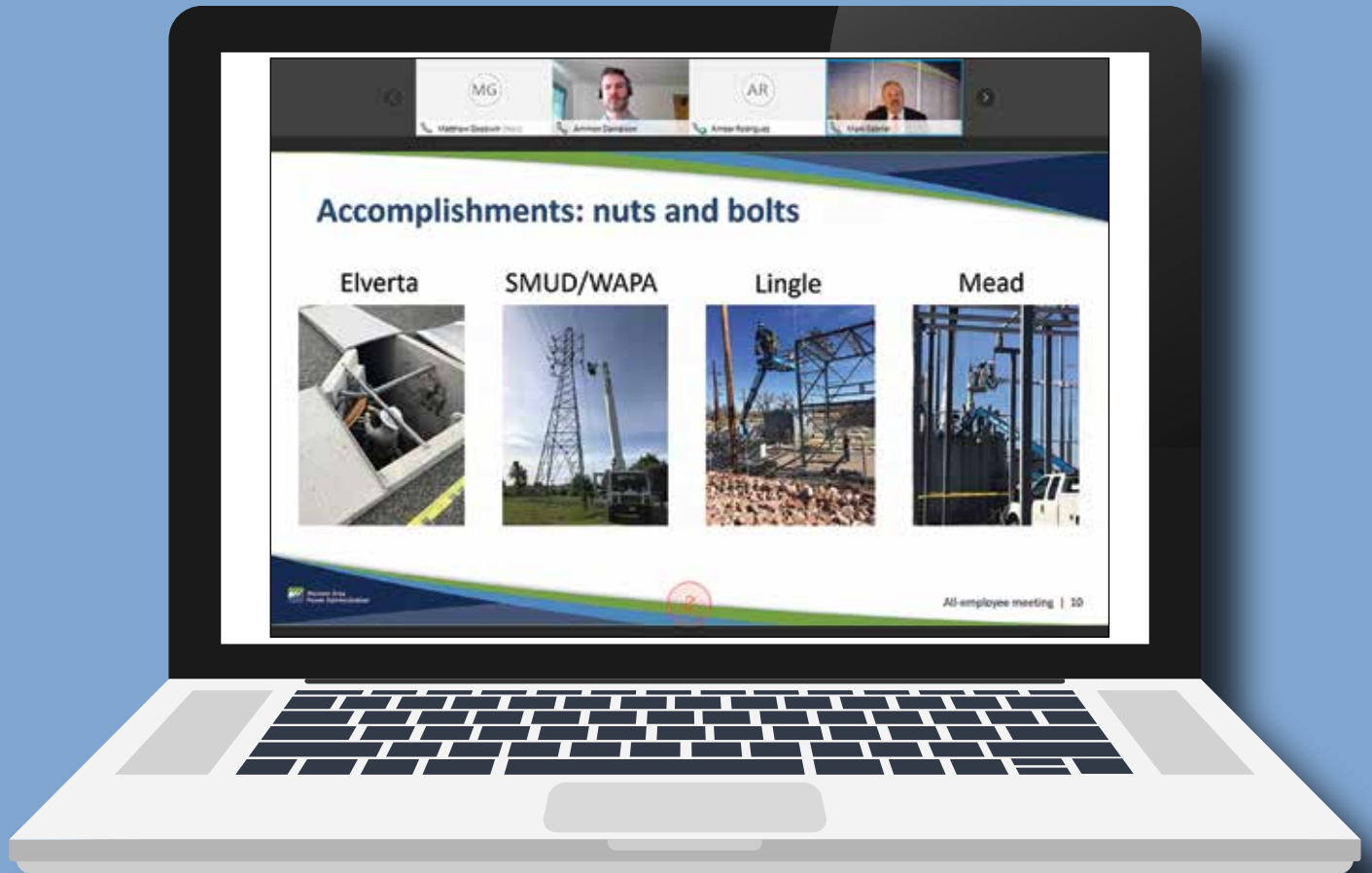
Relevant recovery actions: Diminish collision threat with powerlines. Maximize visibility of lines in use areas. Evaluate shield and fiber add-ons in rebuilds within one mile of stopover habitat.

Topeka shiner

Species information: Spawning from late May to mid-August, depending on water temperature. Some located in degraded streams with silt substrates, off-channel backwater areas, borrow pits and sloughs connected to occupied streams.



Relevant recovery actions: Ensure bridge or culvert fish passage at stream crossings. Avoid water flow alteration and sedimentation delivery.



**Virtual
meetings
provide
real
connection**

To varying degrees, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it much more difficult for WAPA employees to meet in person. Each team and region has experimented to discover the best solution that works for them, but for the All-Employee Meeting the organization needed a singular solution that could accommodate every employee at once.

The first virtual AEM was held May 13. Each speaker, participant and producer helped the meeting proceed as normally as possible from their own home.

Diving right into a production this large would not have been wise but, fortunately, Information Technology, Public Affairs and others had a few opportunities to iron out the kinks beforehand.

With the ever-changing details and implications of the pandemic, Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** wanted to ensure employees could have their questions and concerns addressed. Though Public Affairs had introduced daily, WAPA-wide update emails, Gabriel understood that a town-hall format would allow individuals to have their comments heard and responded to more directly.

The first COVID-19-specific town hall event was held March 25. This was followed April 15 by a similar event specific to craft employees, as they had questions of their own, unique to their duties. A third town hall was held May 6, which featured Department

of Energy Assistant Secretary Bruce Walker as a special guest.

As each of these events brought updates and answers to the employees who needed them, they were also opportunities for the meetings' organizers and producers to identify and troubleshoot problems as they arose.

This meant that by the time of the All-Employee Meeting on May 13, WAPA had experience with organizationwide online meetings and was prepared to host its biggest virtual event yet.

Program and Regulatory Advisor **Ammon Danielson** served as emcee, introducing the speakers throughout the event and providing the opportunity for viewers to participate in interactive polls.

Gabriel spoke first, discussing the state of WAPA and the resilience demonstrated by the organization in these unprecedented times. He also fielded employee questions that had been submitted in advance of the meeting and officially introduced **Tracey LeBeau** as the next Desert Southwest regional manager.

Afterward, Acting Vice President of Procurement **Jerad Gaines** discussed his department and Vice President of IT - Cyber Security **Jim Ball** spoke about how he and his team have been operating at a physical remove from the rest of WAPA.

Reliability-Centered Maintenance Program Coordinator and 2020 Inclusion, Innovation and Technology Team Chair **Jackie Brusoe** discussed the I2T Committee and the upcoming I2T Summit, which has a theme of "Innovation Takes Everyone in a Changing World" and will be held Nov. 19.

The meeting ended with Chief of Staff **Melissa Ardis** discussing the topic that was on everybody's minds: WAPA's plans for a safe return to the workplace.

Ardis assured employees that the only return that would be acceptable would be one conducive to employee health and safety, and that the plans for such are being constantly evaluated and reconsidered as the situation evolves.

Thanks in large part to the lessons that had been learned from the virtual town hall meetings, the virtual AEM was a technical success. Any problems or interruptions were ironed out behind the scenes as they arose, resulting in a smooth viewing experience for employees across WAPA's 15-state footprint. □

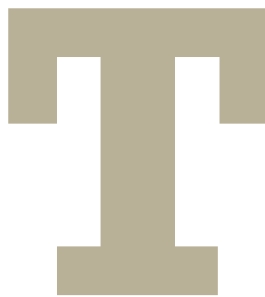
View the recording and other meeting materials at [myWAPA](#), Employee Resources, See more..., All-Employee Meetings





Demonstrating resilience in the “new normal”

By Jen Neville



he utility industry, like the world, is rapidly changing. In fact, so much is changing so quickly that it can become overwhelming. WAPA’s Organizational Change Management Community of Practice offered several virtual courses in early April to facilitate conversation with employees and help them develop their resilience.

Participants discussed the impacts of change, different tips they each use to adjust and the three phases of transition following change.

Those three phases are managing endings (letting go), navigating the neutral zone (getting comfortable with the uncomfortable) and building new beginnings (celebrating wins).

Let it go!

When it comes to managing endings, Change Management trainers provided a few strategies to help employees.

The first step to managing endings is identifying the

loss—essentially, naming it.

Common losses include status, power, influence, work relationships, personal identity, control of expertise, routine, structure, meaningful work and control of destiny. Naming the loss helps to process it.

The second step is developing strategies for letting go. This is a personal endeavor. As guidance, here are some strategies participants shared to address specific kinds of loss.

For work relationships:

- Intentionally develop your network.
- Set aside specific time to work with a new group or new boss.

- Create a fun way to team-build with others or get to know others.
- Set up virtual coffee breaks and talks over Lync.
- Go beyond email; pick up the phone.
- Put yourself in someone else’s shoes; see a different perspective.

For routine and structure:

- Develop self-structure. What’s within your control? Stay in your lane.
- Leverage your calendar and optimize your schedule.
- Experiment with new routines.

Healthy actions counteract change fatigue

When managing multiple changes at once, self-care is the most important way to amplify your resilience. Many individuals find it easier to take care of everyone else first, and then only take care of themselves if there is time left over.

Switch that thinking around and remember that by taking care of ourselves first we will be better able to help others and provide our best efforts at work and in our community.

A holistic approach to health and wellness includes four key aspects of our lives—physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual, the latter covering whatever gives your life meaning.

It is normal to have reactions to change in any of these aspects. Depending on the change and anything else going on in your life, there may be more reactions in one aspect than another. For that reason, it is best to have a balance of healthy actions available. A well-rounded set of healthy actions is optimal for successfully dealing with constant change.

Understand others, their experiences

Participants also reflected on gaining a different perspective, appreciating the changes and impacts faced by

WAPA employees required to continue working from their duty stations during the pandemic.

Employees in roles such as Operations or Maintenance are facing challenges such as following new protocols to maximize social distancing and keeping their workstations and trucks sanitized.

Maintenance personnel are going directly to the substation or jobsite to avoid stopping at the office and to support social distancing. In order to reliably maintain WAPA's portion of the bulk electric system, employees have prepared and tested creative solutions to protect their coworkers and families by staying sequestered at work, including procuring RVs for lodging, iPads for entertainment and military "meals, ready to eat," or MREs, for food.

The tools and resources for resilience are applicable in these scenarios, as well.

Get off the computer!

Those teleworking also face unique difficulties. Some have found it difficult to draw boundaries with work now that their workspace is their home space, resulting in many people working longer days.

Here are some tips and tricks for managing this from webinar participants:

- Have a door, a physical way to separate work and home.
- Dedicate a space for work and then only go in there during your work hours.
- Change clothes.
- Get out and walk the dog.
- Set an alarm for the end of your workday. Also, create a "snooze rule" to get your last task wrapped up and items set for the next day.
- Set standard, normal work hours, just as you would in the office.
- Shut down your computer and put it in your workbag until the next day.
- Get in the car and drive around the block at the beginning and end of the day.
- Enjoy the unexpected, such as lunch breaks with other people in the same place as you.
- Use an app such as Squared – Time Management to say enough is enough for the day. □

Note: Neville is a management analyst.

Training highlights

The robust discussion during the training led to a number of key findings on major topics.

On change and transition:

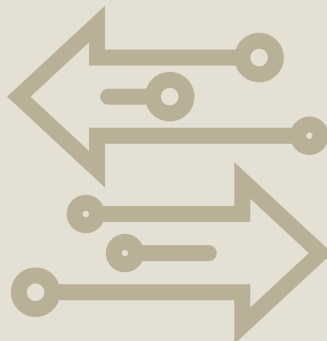
- Change is constant.
- People react differently to change.
- Transition is a three-step process.
- There are times you might feel unsettled.

On planning:

- Have a plan and tools for change.
- Have awareness of where you are: in transition.
- Find strategies to move forward.

On training and support:

- Change Management training provides techniques to deal positively with change.
- WAPA has change agents to consult if your team is going through a change.



Watch the Individual Transition in Organizations, Developing Personal Resistance series by visiting [myWAPA, Programs, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Paths, Change Management, Individual Transition in Organizations, Developing Personal Resistance](#)



If you are interested in learning more, visit [myWAPA, Programs, Change Management, Change Management Toolkit](#)



The Employee Assistance Program is available to help employees cope with professional or personal challenges, including family matters, work relationships, loneliness and much more. Visit [espyr.com](#) or call 800.869.0276.



Contract manager reaches 40 years of service

Whatever your role at WAPA, the odds are good that you work with at least a few contract employees. These contractors could have been hired for any number of reasons, whether to assist in the completion of temporary projects or to complement an existing team of federal employees with a particular set of skills.

On April 28, Project Manager Eva Lampman celebrated a milestone: 40 years of WAPA service, most of those spent finding and hiring contract employees for the organization. Currently, Lampman is responsible for managing the Cherokee Nation Strategic Programs contract, overseeing the Wyandotte Services and Wyandotte Technologies subcontracts.

Due to the nature of her position, Lampman has been involved with a large number of programs and departments at WAPA. Upon learning of her milestone, many of the contractors she hired and worked with reached out to *Closed Circuit* to share their memories of working with her.



Many of them discussed Lampman as a manager.

"Eva has a special way of making a person want to work harder," said Lands Realty Clerk **Tracy Rogers**. "She has a heart of gold and work ethics we all aspire to. I'm grateful for her leadership."

"Having worked in many different industries under many different kinds of managers, I can confidently say that Eva is, by far, one of the best managers out there," said Technical Writer **Jennifer Williams**. "Her authenticity and care for and interest in her staff are genuine and mean so much to me, and I'm constantly amazed at her ability to juggle many tasks at once with seeming ease. She sets a heck of an example to live up to."

"The best manager a person could wish for," declared Personnel Security Support Assistant **Olga Coopridier**. "I consider Eva one of the benefits that came with my employment package. We can rely on Eva to have our back; if we share concerns with her, she will never doubt or question us. Eva is also amazing at voicing her appreciation for our accomplishments, no matter how small they are."

Some of them made note of the substantial periods of time they'd worked with Lampman and how consistently positive the experience has been.

"Working with Eva has been such a pleasure," said Security Specialist **Bernadette Martinez**. "She really goes the extra mile in all she does, especially for her employees. I have been so thankful to have a boss like her for the past 12 years, and hopefully 12 more."

"I have been working with Eva as her administrative assistant for 15 and a half years, and it has been a great experience for me," said Administrative and Technical Support Technician **Diana Valdez**. "Eva is a hard-working manager who is willing to go above and beyond for her employees and her

customers. She is part of the heart of WAPA."

"I have worked on no less than seven different contracts with Eva as a coworker and eventually as a supervisor," said Drafter **David Sanchez**. "I like what I do and I like working for WAPA. The one constant we could always count on was Eva, so 34 years later I'm still here and Eva has had a lot to do with that."

Engineering Technician **Debra Denton** mentioned that she'd worked with Lampman for 35 years, and emphasized that "she's an outstanding, caring person who really looks out for her employees."

"Eva and I hit it off on my very first day of work at WAPA more than 36 years ago," recalled Graphic Illustrator **Joel Klassen**. "She can be tough when the job demands it, but her people skills and easygoing attitude have made her by far the best of the program managers to whom I've reported during my time here."

An impressive number of them shared not only their appreciation for her as a manager but as a person.

"Working with Eva Lampman was such a blessing," said Realty Specialist **Barb O'Rourke**. "One of the things I loved most was that she never just jumped into the subject at hand. Her first comments were, 'How are you doing?' or 'I hope you are having a great day.' She puts other people and their feelings first, and I admire her for that."

"The first time my hearing-impaired mom 'met' Eva was when I was talking to her on the phone from my parked car with my mom sitting next to me," remembered Drafter **Barbara Palmer**. "After a few moments, my mom said, 'Oh, I like her! I can hear her!' I laughed and handed the phone to my mom and she and Eva proceeded to have a lovely visit."

"Eva is the best manager that I have ever worked with in 21 years," said Technical Writer **Paul Robbins**. "She

genuinely cares and will stand by you in any situation, big or small. Recently, she took time out of a very busy week to talk to me, facilitate discussion with others and resolve what I later thought was a little thing. After it was over, I said something like, 'Sorry to bother you with this.' Eva told me that it was no bother at all. She ended by saying, 'I'm literally standing by your side!'"

"I started working with Eva a little over a year ago," said Administrative and Technical Support Technician **Leah Wilson**. "Little did I know it would change my life forever. She is amazing to work for. She trusts in her employees. She is kind to everyone but can be assertive when necessary. She is very supportive and her communication is unmatched."

"Working with Eva all these years has brought a wide range of experiences, adventures and memories," said Engineering Technician **Lynn Fleury**, who has been with WAPA slightly longer than Lampman. "Too many to mention!"

"For 40 years and eight contract companies, I have wholeheartedly supported WAPA," reflected Lampman. "I have supported many offices by providing extraordinary customer service and have hired solid candidates to help achieve WAPA's goals and mission."

Lampman's long service to WAPA is impressive in its own right, but for at least one employee, it reinforces something important. "Forty years," reflected Technical Writer **John Flynt**. "Well, it proves one thing: Eva is and always has been there for all of us." □

Would you like to nominate your manager for an upcoming *Closed Circuit* feature? Contact reed@wapa.gov



Reflecting on rolling it back

By Will Schnyer

Like many WAPA employees, I follow social media powerline forums to remain engaged with current industry-related topics. One of these forums reports on nationwide electric utility incidents and accidents. They commonly use the phrase “we roll it back” after an incident or accident has taken place.

Safe practices and procedures are paramount for field crews.



The phrase refers to signs frequently used in various workplaces, saying something along the lines of, "It has been xx days since last accident." Rolling back the counter on a sign like that is never good news.

Before I start reading about the event, if I see "we roll it back," I already know a whole lot of people have been impacted and will have to confront the consequences of the event.

These words indicate one of our brothers or sisters has possibly sustained injuries that could leave long-lasting mental or physical scars. I know this to be true because I, myself, was a member of a crew when an accident took place.

It wasn't an enjoyable experience. To this day I can't rid myself of the mental pictures I carry from this event, even though it took place decades ago.

You might wonder why I mention any of this. Well, my son has chosen to follow in my footsteps and will be starting a lineman apprenticeship in the near future. Knowing what I know, I wish I could transfer my craft knowledge and experiences to him so that he could forgo the steep learning curve he will encounter in his career.

I'm a realist, however, and I understand as John Keats once said, "Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced." Personal experiences provide the most enduring lessons.

Furthermore, one of my many responsibilities is to ensure the on-the-job safety and health of all craft employees I supervise. Accordingly, I met with two new hires recently. One is a journeyman lineman and the other is a brand-new apprentice lineman.

We discussed personal accountability and responsibility. We also addressed a number of important safety principles:

- No employee should, under any circumstances or to any extent,

XX DAYS SINCE LAST ACCIDENT

set aside safety procedures or common sense for personal convenience or to meet a project schedule.

- You must understand and act according to your rights and responsibilities to identify and take action to reduce and eliminate hazardous work environments and work practices.
- Without fear of retaliation, an employee has the right and responsibility to not participate in an activity or action they deem to be unsafe. Additionally, an employee has the right and responsibility to stop any action they believe would place a person in imminent danger.
- Without fear of retaliation, employees are encouraged to report near-miss incidents. Reporting a near-miss may prevent injury to other employees or prevent damage to equipment.
- No employee will be subject to restraint, interference, coercion, reprisal or other discrimination by virtue of participation in our Safety and Occupational Health program.

You're probably thinking to yourself that these principles make implicit sense and shouldn't really need to be discussed. I tend to agree with you

but, unfortunately, I have been part of work environments in the past in which speaking up is easier said than done, especially for apprentices.

I stated earlier that I wish I could transfer my craft knowledge and experiences to my son; I also wish I could pass them on to my new apprentice. I wish I could transfer my safety knowledge and experiences as well.

Since I can't, I hope through their own learning experiences they become responsible and accountable for their actions, especially as they affect personal safety. I hope that they never set aside safety procedures or common sense for personal convenience. Most importantly, I hope they are empowered to always, as WAPA's core value puts it, "Do what is right. Do what is safe."

To drive this point home, Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** sent a letter to employees recently in which he said, "Everyone is the safety person. I am the safety person as is the newest apprentice and everyone in between. It is everyone's obligation to look out for one another. We owe it to ourselves, each other and all our loved ones to take those few extra minutes to evaluate if a work activity is safe."

The takeaway is this: We don't have to be an administrator or a foreman to be bold and lead. We don't have to be in a position of influence to have influence. Leadership is action, not a title.

Each one of us is a "safety person." If we step up, it encourages others to step up. Our collective goal should be to ensure all work environments are conducive to speaking up for safety.

Let's do everything we can to keep that as a standard practice, so we never have to "roll it back." □

Note: Schnyer is vice president of transmission system asset management for Sierra Nevada.



Keep your home office ergonomic

By Paul Robbins

During this extended telework period, do you feel it? That kink in your neck or shoulders, a sore lower back, maybe stiffness in your wrist or elbow? These can all be signs of poor home office ergonomics.

Makeshift work areas at home can be ergonomically unsound because we build our workstation on and around what is available. Sometimes the slightest body motion caused by misplaced equipment or awkward posture can lead to pains and strains that grow into bigger problems.

Poor ergonomics can lead to musculoskeletal disorders affecting tendons, nerves, ligaments, muscles and blood vessels. These disorders are caused by various factors including repetitive motions, awkward posture, a poorly configured work area and other environmental influences. Common complaints include spine, back, neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist and finger pain.

The following information can help you reevaluate your home office and help prevent ergonomic injuries.

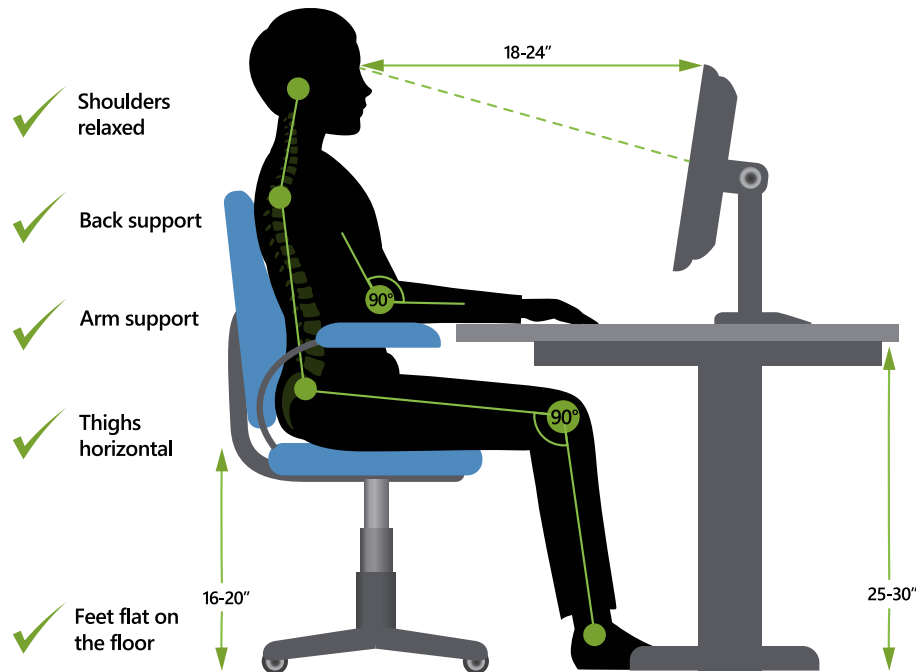
Posture

Much neck and back pain is related to how we sit. Slouching or hunching forward can aggravate this pain.

Use a comfortable chair with good back support, keep your shoulders relaxed and concentrate on keeping your head and neck balanced and in line with your upper body.

Use arm rests that allow for 90-degree bend at the elbow, keeping wrists and hands in line with the forearms. Your thighs should be horizontal with a 90-degree bend at the knees and feet flat on the floor.

Cramped conditions can also cause joint and muscle pain. Your thighs should not be tight under your desk and your feet and legs should have enough space to allow you to move forward.



Workstation configuration

Your eyes, head and neck will suffer if your monitor is not lined up correctly.

You should not have to bend your head or neck to see the screen. The top of the screen should be at or below eye-level, straight ahead of and 18 to 24 inches away from you.

If you have a dual monitor setup, avoid turning your neck and upper torso to look at a screen. Instead, swivel your chair slightly toward the monitor in use.

Improper use of a mouse can cause wrist, arm and shoulder strains.

Keep your mouse close and parallel to the keyboard so you don't have to reach. Avoid hinging your wrist to the right and left as you use it; maintain a straight neutral position. This can be aided by using a mouse pad with a wrist or palm rest.

Also, decrease mouse use when possible by substituting keystrokes for tasks. For example, press Ctrl+S to save and Ctrl+P to print. Keyboards with built-in touchpads can also reduce mouse usage.

Accessories and lighting

If you use document holders, make sure they are at the same distance and height as your monitor. Consider

hands-free telephone options, such as a speaker phone or a headset, instead of holding the phone between your shoulder and ear. This can avoid neck and shoulder pain.

Proper lighting for home workstations is sometimes overlooked. Too much light causes glare or washout on a monitor screen and not enough light can cause contrast issues. Both challenges can lead to headache, eye strain and fatigue.

Improper lighting can also cause awkward postures as you try to view the computer screen. Use blinds and curtains to reduce glare from windows or position your screen at right angles to the light source. Use supplemental task lighting if needed for desk work while limiting brightness around monitors.

Anti-glare monitor screens and well-distributed and diffused lighting in your work area can also help reduce eye strain.

Mobility and stretching

A mix of sitting and standing throughout the day has a positive effect on the body, mind and metabolism. Stand when using the phone, move every half hour and take a quick walk at lunchtime. These actions will help you feel better, clear your mind and can make you more productive.

Stretching is a great way to combine movement, flexibility and muscle-tension relief. Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health has a program called Welcome to Stretching at the Department of Energy. This plan provides a full array of stretching exercises that can be practiced during the workday.

Each stretch lasts between five and 30 seconds and can be performed in segments every 30 minutes. The Learning Nucleus and Employee Assistance Program websites also have classes and resources dedicated to stretching, ergonomics and wellness.

Don't ignore the aches and pains that might be caused by your ergonomically challenged home office. Take the time to reevaluate your space and do what you can to decrease risks.

Your body will appreciate it. □

Note: Robbins is a technical writer who works under the Cherokee Nation Strategic Programs contract.



For more information, visit [osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations)

Brief Transmissions

WAPA welcomes DSW regional manager

On May 10, WAPA officially welcomed Senior Vice President and Desert Southwest Regional Manager **Tracey LeBeau**. She had been acting in this role since November 2019.

DSW operates more than 40 substations and 3,100 miles of extra-high-voltage transmission lines. As DSW regional manager, LeBeau will lead more than 220 federal employees and 130 contractors in marketing and delivering clean, renewable, reliable, cost-based federal hydroelectric power and related services from Hoover, Parker and Davis dams to nearly 70 municipalities, electric cooperatives, federal and state agencies, irrigation districts and Native American tribes in the Southwest.



"Tracey's extensive experience in management, financing and developing energy projects will greatly benefit DSW and WAPA as a whole as we transition to a 21st century grid," said Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** in his announcement. "She has demonstrated time and again her aptitude, knowledge and leadership while on my senior team in other positions, and I am confident she will continue to excel as regional manager."

LeBeau began at WAPA in 2014 as the Transmission Infrastructure Program manager. In April 2018, she stood up and managed the new Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. In this capacity, she organized and led Natural Resources, Procurement, Human Resources, Records Management, Facilities, the Transmission Infrastructure Program and the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity under a new leadership structure.

In her new role, LeBeau will continue to lend her leadership to organization functions, including the management of WAPA's borrowing authority and acquisition management policies and procedures.

"Please join me in congratulating Tracey on her new position," Gabriel concluded. "I look forward to our continued work together to prepare WAPA for the energy frontier."

I2T Award nominations due July 13

Submissions are now open for WAPA's Inclusion, Innovation and Technology Award, or I2T Award. This is your chance to recognize your most innovative, inclusive and creative colleagues.

The I2T Award is an Administrator's award that recognizes an employee, contractor or group that has made significant contributions related to the development, testing or implementation of emerging new technologies or business process innovations.

To qualify, the nomination must clearly outline how the contribution meets one or more of these criteria:

- The technology or business innovation developed, adopted or adapted for implementation will contribute significantly to improving or enhancing the way WAPA conducts business.
- The technology or business innovation will result in a significant improvement in business efficiency or effectiveness.
- The technology or business innovation will result in a significant advancement in the "state of the art."
- The technology or business innovation generates durable, long-term benefits.
- The technology or business innovation contributes significantly to the accomplishment of a WAPA goal or objective as identified in *Strategic Roadmap 2024*.

All nominations will be evaluated by the I2T Committee. The awards will be presented Nov. 19 at the I2T Summit.

The nomination form has been emailed to all WAPA employees. Return the form to innovation@wapa.gov by July 13.



Asset Management Almanac now available

WAPA has published *Protecting Assets in a World of Change*, its fiscal year 2019 almanac. The document highlights Asset Management's expanding role in driving data-based decisions that support grid reliability and resilience.

Read it to learn how AM collects, analyzes and reports data about WAPA's critical equipment and systems to provide the organization with a comprehensive picture of asset condition and potential risk.

This year's almanac includes reports on four new asset classes—batteries, coupling capacitor voltage transformers, current transformers and Information Technology network equipment—as well as more granular data on transmission systems.



Asset Management
Program Summary 2019

Western Area
Power Administration

Read the fiscal year 2019 Asset Management Almanac at wapa.gov, Newsroom, Publications

